

HOW ALLIES TREATED GERMAN POWs

by [Michael Walsh](#)

"War crime trials for allied soldiers overdue." Says analyst

NEWS DESK 24th JUNE 2000MICHAEL WALSH

"British and allied troops appearing as defendants in war crimes trials with brutal Serbs and former Red Army thugs is well overdue", says 20th Century analyst, Michael Walsh. His research exposes allied genocide, enslavement and institutionalized ill treatment of axis prisoners-of-war both during and after World War II.

He says, "the scale of abuse of prisoners-of-war was contrary to the Geneva and other conventions to which Britain and its allies were signatories. As late as 1948, three years after the war's end, the British Government's treatment of its foreign prisoners was subject to International Red Cross scrutiny and international condemnation. The IRC threatened to bring the British government before international tribunals for abuse and illegal enslavement. Typically, British administered prisoner-of-war camps were worse than Belsen long after the war had ended and war disruption ceased. Tragically even civilians were illegally held, deported and murdered in the tens of thousands whilst the evil killers responsible have so far evaded justice.

The respected Associated Press Photographer, Henry Griffin who had taken the pictures of corpses in Buchenwald and Dachau when visiting Allied POW camps agreed: "The only difference I can see between these men and those corpses is that here they are still breathing." (1)

"According to revelations by members of the House of Commons, about 130,000 former German officers and men were held during the winter of 1945-46 in British camps in Belgium under conditions which British officers have described as 'not much better than Belsen.'" (2)

TORTURE AND BRUTALITY

Adding to international outrage, Cyril Connolly, one of England's most acclaimed writers reported: "British guards imprisoned German troops and tortured them." He described how "they were so possessed by propaganda about German 'Huns' that they obviously enjoyed demonstrating their atrocities to visiting journalists. A British reporter named Moorehead who was present at these torture fests observed that 'a young British medical officer and a captain of engineers managed the Bergen-Belsen camp. "The captain was in the best of moods," he said. "When we approached the cells of gaol guards, the sergeant lost his temper." The captain explained. "This morning we had an interrogation. I'm afraid the prisoners don't look exactly nice.'

The cells were opened for the visiting journalists. "The German prisoners lay there, crumpled, moaning, covered with gore. The man next to me made vain attempts to get to his feet and finally managed to stand up. He stood there trembling, and tried to stretch out his arms as if fending off blows. "Up!" yelled the sergeant. "Come off the wall."

"They pushed themselves off from the wall and stood there, swaying. In another cell the medical officer had just finished an interrogation. "Up." yelled the officer. "Get up." The man lay in his blood on the floor. He propped two arms on a chair and tried to pull himself up. A second demand and he succeeded in getting to his feet. He stretched his arms towards us. "Why don't you kill me off?" he moaned.

"The dirty bastard is jabbering this all morning." the sergeant stated. (3)

SHOOTING PRISONERS ♦FOR FUN♦

Former British Army veteran A.W Perkins of Holland-on-Sea described conditions in the ♦Sennelager♦ British concentration camp, which shockingly held, not captured troops but civilians. He recounts; "During the latter half of 1945 I was with British troops guarding suspected Nazi civilians living on starvation rations in a camp called Sennelager. They were frequently beaten and grew as thin as concentration camp victims, scooping handfuls of swill from our waste bins."

This ex-guard described how other guards amused themselves by baiting starving prisoners. "They could be shot on sight if they ventured close to the perimeter fence. It was a common trick to throw a cigarette just inside the fence and shoot any prisoner who tried to reach it." (4).

"When Press representatives ask to examine the prison camps, the British loudly refuse with the excuse that the Geneva Convention bars such visits to prisoner-of-war camps." complained press correspondent Arthur Veysey from London on May 28th 1946.

"UNDERFED AND BEATEN" ADMITS TOP AMERICAN NEWSPAPER

Typically "The prisoners lived through the winter in tents and slept on the bare ground under one blanket each. They say they are underfed and beaten and kicked by guards. Many have no underclothes or boots." reported the Chicago Tribune Press Service on 19 May 1946 one year after the war♦s end.

"In the summer of 1946 an increasing number of prisoners of-war were escaping from British slave camps often with British civilian aid. "Accounts of the chases by military police are reminiscent of pre-Civil War pursuits by fleeing Negro fugitives." stated an Associated Press dispatch (London, August 27th, 1946) more than sixteen months after the war ended.

CIVILIANS; WOMEN AND CHILDREN MACHINE-GUNNED

Tens of thousands of middle-European peoples, displaced by the war who fell into British hands were treated even worse in British controlled Austria and Yugoslavia. There, Britain and the NKVD ran the concentration camps jointly. The latter, forerunners to the evil KGB, were invited to assist the British in the capture and corralling, deportation and slaughter of their captives.

One British officer described how "The prisoners (civilians) were treated coarsely but not brutally. They were pushed and shoved but there was no resistance, no fighting or trying to get back or get away. They were all completely docile, resigned to their fate. The soldiers collected them all quickly into groups and marched them away to be machine-gunned in groups.'

The British officer added, 'some of them didn't get very far I'm afraid. At the back of the station there was a wood, a copse, and they seemed to be marched behind this copse. Shortly afterwards there were quite a number of sustained bursts of machine-gun fire. I can't say for certain what happened, because I couldn't see the shooting. But I am pretty sure that a lot of them were shot there and then, not on the siding itself but just around the corner of the wood."

This is typical of many accounts when units of the British Army working with Red Army NKVD officers, hunted down and butchered tens of thousands of Cossack civilian refugees including children in Austria, in summer, 1945 after the war had ended.

A BLOOD-SPATTERED BRITISH TRANSPORT TRAIN

Tens of thousands of people of many nationalities were hunted down and rounded up like cattle to be taken to the Red Army♦s killing fields. One account described how ♦the whole train was bespattered with blood. They

were open-plan carriages, and I remember the bloodstains where bodies had been dragged right down the corridor between the seats and down three of four steps. The lavatories were absolutely covered in blood...."

"Another such patrol, consisting of two Red Army officers and four British soldiers set off into the hills on horseback on June 8th. They captured one such group on the lower slopes.... "The Cossacks ran off, leaving just a few, mainly women and children who were too weak to move. One soldier spotted a Cossack in the distance, aimed his rifle at him, fired and saw him drop. As he was not seen to rise again it was assumed he had been killed."

Captain Duncan McMillan remembers, 'Being guided to a small railway station where there was a barbed-wire enclosure' He saw the Cossacks being unloaded from the trucks and described how they were stripped of their possessions, even food before being marched away. 'Many British soldiers who were there have testified that they heard the rattle of machine-guns nearby just moments after the prisoners were removed.' James Davidson said: "We thought that machine-gunning must be the finish of them. We thought they were just taken back there and slaughtered."

These awful accounts were described in Nicholas Bethell's book, *The Last Secret* published by Futura, (London) in 1974. The English legal apparatus suppressed further accounts.

SLAVE LABOUR IN THE CENTURY

In August 1946 15 months after the end of the Second World War, according to the International Red Cross, "Britain had 460,000 German prisoners slaving for her." This was in direct contravention of the Geneva Convention (Enslavement of Prisoners-of-War is a violation of the Geneva Convention. Article.75) which Britain was a signatory to. Arthur Veysey of the Chicago Tribune Press Service on May 28th 1946 reported "When they (German POWs) learned upon arrival in British and French ports they were to be worked indefinitely as slaves, they became sullen."

PROFITING FROM GERMAN SLAVES

Arthur Veysey appalled by the British government's abuse of human rights and the illegality of its evil slave-ownership policies and defiance of the Geneva Convention said, "The British Government nets over \$250,000,000 annually from its slaves. The Government, which frankly calls itself the 'owner' of the prisoners, hires the men out to any employer needing men, charging the going rate for such work, usually \$15 to \$20 a week. It pays the slaves from 10 to 20 cents a day. The prisoners are never paid in cash, but are given credits either in the form of vouchers or credits."

THE SOVIET UNION FOLLOWS BRITAIN'S SLAVE EMPIRE EXAMPLE

When American attempts were made to prevent Stalin from abducting five million Germans, many of them civilians including children, as slave laborers after Germany's defeat, the Soviets made their point. They produced a proclamation signed by General Dwight Eisenhower a year earlier, which gave the Soviets complete freedom to do whatever, they wished with captured Germans. This included deportation, enslavement; to loot and destroy without restraint, even using German transport to do so. They reminded the US Government that they had an equal right to do as the Americans were doing and were exercising the same right.

Eyewitness accounts describe events when Berlin and Breslau surrendered. "The long grey-green columns of prisoners were marched east downcast and fearful towards huge depots near Leningrad, Moscow, Minsk, Stalingrad, Kiev, Kharkov and Sevastopol. All fit men had to march 22 miles a day. Those physically handicapped went in handcarts or carts pulled by spare beasts." This was reported in the Congressional Record on March 29th 1946.

STARVATION OF POWS IN FRANCE

By August 1946 France according to the International Red Cross had enslaved nearly three-quarters of a million former German servicemen. Of these 475,000 had been captured by the Americans who in a deal had transferred them to French control for the expressed purpose of forced labour. Interestingly in a macabre way, the French returned 2,474 German POWs complaining that they were weaklings. (5)

Those returned must indeed have been in a bad way for the 472,526 remaining slaves had already been described by correspondents as; "a beggar army of pale, thin men clad in vermin infested tatters." All were pronounced unfit for work, three quarters of them due to deliberate starvation. Of this unfortunate army of slaves 19% were so badly treated they needed to be hospitalized (6)

In the notorious camp in the Sarthe District for 20,000 prisoners, inmates received just 900 calories a day; thus 12 died every day in the hospital. Four to five thousand are unable to work any more. Recently trains with new prisoners arrived at the camp; several prisoners had died during the trip, several others had tried to stay alive by eating coal that had been lying in the freight train by which they came. (7)

On December 5th 1946 the American Government requested the repatriation (by October 1, 1947) to Germany of the 674,000 German prisoners-of-war it had handed over to France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxemburg.

France agreed in principle but refused to abide by the release date stipulated. They pointed out, correctly, that a December 1st 1945 memorandum clearly stated that German prisoners handed over to the French by the US Government were chattels to be used indefinitely as forced labour. (8)

US ARMY SLAUGHTERED GERMAN POWS

The German armed forces invariably obeyed the Rules of War conventions to the letter. Speaking for himself and other allied military commanders, Major General Robert W. Grow, U.S.A. Commander 6th Armored Division in Europe conceded there was no German atrocity problem.

"My service during World War Two was in command of an armored division throughout the European campaign, from Normandy to Saxony. My division lost quite a number of officers and men captured between July 1944 and April 1945. In no instance did I hear of personnel from our division receiving treatment other than proper under the 'Rules of Land Warfare'. As far as the 6th Armored Division was concerned in its 280 days of front line contact, there was no 'atrocity problem'. Frankly, I was aghast, as were many of my contemporaries, when we learned of the proposed 'war crimes' trials and the fact that military commanders were among the accused. I know of no general officer who approved of them." (9)

Despite the German observance of convention the American forces response was often as summary and as brutal as those practiced by their Soviet allies. Only in cases where large numbers of captured soldiers had been taken were they to be enslaved. If captured in smaller groups the US Army policy was simply to slaughter their captured prisoners where they stood.

A specific study is now being made for the purpose of compiling evidence of such atrocities to which the author, Michael Walsh, would appreciate input.

One such case was the cold-blooded slaying of an estimated 700 troops of the 8th SS Mountain Division. These troops who had fought with honorable distinction had earlier captured a US field hospital. Although the German troops had conducted themselves properly they were, when subsequently captured by the US Army, routinely separated and gunned down in groups by squads of American troops.

US ARMY TURNS PEACEFUL DACHAU INTO CHARNEL HOUSE

A similar fate befell infantrymen of the SS Westphalia Brigade who were captured by the US 3rd Armored Division. Most of the German captives were shot through the back of the head. "The jubilant Americans told the locals to leave their bodies in the streets as a warning to others of US revenge" Their corpses lay in the streets for

five days before the occupying forces relented and allowed the corpses to be buried. After the war the German authorities attempted, without success, to prosecute the GIs responsible. (10)

Ironically in the light of postwar research it has been revealed that the only atrocities committed at Dachau were those carried out by the victorious allies. Equally ironically this camp was an allied concentration camp (eleven years) for a longer period of time than it was a German administered camp. There, "Three hundred SS camp guards were quickly neutralized." on the orders of General Dwight D. Eisenhower.

The term neutralized of course is a politically correct (or cowardly) way of saying that prisoners-of-war were rounded up and machine-gunned in groups. Accounts of the mass murder of prisoners-of-war at Dachau have been described in at least two books; *The Day of the Americans* by Nerin Gun, Fleet Publishing Company, New York, and, *Deliverance Day - The Last Hours at Dachau* by Michael Selzer; Lippincot, Philadelphia

These books describe how German prisoners were collected in groups, placed against a wall and methodically machine-gunned by American soldiers while some were still standing, hands raised in surrender. American soldiers casually climbed over the still twitching bodies, killing the wounded. Whilst this was happening, American photographers were taking pictures of the massacres that have since been published.

At Dachau, which was in the American zone of Germany, a shock force of American and Polish guards attempted to entrain a group of Russian prisoners from Vlasov's Army who had refused to be repatriated under the new American ruling.

MASS SUICIDES

'All of these men refused to entrain,' Robert Murphy wrote in his report of the incident. 'They begged to be shot. They resisted entrainment by taking off their clothes and refusing to leave their quarters.... Tear-gas forced them out of the building into the snow where those who had cut and stabbed themselves fell exhausted and bleeding in the snow. Nine men hanged themselves and one had stabbed himself to death and one other who had stabbed himself subsequently died; while twenty others are still in hospital from self-inflicted wounds. The entrainment was finally effected of 368 men.' (11)

"The last operation of this kind in Germany took place at Plattling near Regensburg, where fifteen hundred men of Vlasov's Army had been interned by the Americans. In the early hours of February 24th, 1946, they were driven out of their huts wearing only their night-clothes, and handed over to the Russians in the forest near the Bavarian-Czech border. Before the train set off on its return journey the American guards were horrified to see the bodies of Vlasov's men who had already committed suicide hanging in rows from trees, and when they returned to Plattling even the German SS prisoners in the nearby POW camp jeered at them for what they had done." (13)

According to the *Toronto Daily Star*, March, 9th, 1968, "Former members of an illegal Israeli force which was given absolute freedom to slaughter Germans conceded that "More than 1,000 Nazi SS Officers died as a result of eating arsenic-impregnated bread introduced April, 13th, 1946, in an American-run prisoner-of-war camp near Nuremberg."

After the US victory (the battle for Remagen Bridge) Germans in the Rhineland surrendered *en masse*. Between April and July 1945, some 260,000 German prisoners-of-war were held under American guard in the boggy fields between Remagen and Sinzig. They were kept in the open air and their daily ration was one potato, a biscuit, a spoonful of vegetables and some water. Racked by disease, at least 1,200 died, according to German records." (14)

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH CONDEMNS US SLAVERY

In the USA where 140,000 German prisoners-of-war were shipped, the Catholic Bishops Conference described how, "Multitudes of civilians and prisoners of war have been deported and degraded into forced labor unworthy of human beings."

"Hundreds of thousands, if not millions, are put like slaves to forced labor, although the only thing with which they can be reproached is the fact that they were soldiers. Many of these poor fellows are without news from home and have not been allowed to send a sign of life to their dear ones."

GERMAN SLAVES HELD IN ALLIED COUNTRIES

United States **140,000** (US Occupation Zone of which **100,000** were held in France, **30,000** in Italy, **14,000** in Belgium. Great Britain **460,000** German slaves. The Soviet Union **4,000,000 - 5,000,000** estimated. France had **680,000** German slaves by August 1946. Yugoslavia **80,000**, Belgium **48,000**, Czechoslovakia **45,000**, Luxembourg **4,000**, Holland **1,300**. Source: **International Red Cross**.

"AN EVIL PRECEDENT"

An outraged International Red Cross organization opined: "The United States, Britain and France, nearly a year after peace are violating International Red Cross agreements they solemnly signed in 1929. Although thousands of former German soldiers are being used in the hazardous work of clearing minefields, sweeping sea mines and razing shattered buildings, the Geneva Convention expressly forbids employing prisoners 'in any dangerous labour or in the transport of any material used in warfare.'

Henry Wales in Geneva, Switzerland on April 13, 1946 added, 'The bartering of captured enemy soldiers by the victors throws the world back to the dark ages when feudal barons raided adjoining duchies to replenish their human live stock. It is an iniquitous system and an evil precedent because it is wide open for abuse with difficulty in establishing responsibility. It is manifestly unjust and sell them for political reasons as the African Negroes were a century ago.'

GERMAN TREATMENT OF POWs FAR MORE HUMANE

By contrast the German armed forces behaved impeccably towards their prisoners-of-war. "The most amazing thing about the atrocities in this war is that there have been so few of them. I have come up against few instances where the Germans have not treated prisoners according to the rules, and respected the Red Cross reported respected newspaper The Progressive February, 4th1945.

Allan Wood, London Correspondent of the London Express agreed. "The Germans even in their greatest moments of despair obeyed the Convention in most respects. True it is that there were front line atrocities - passions run high up there - but they were incidents, not practices, and misadministration of their American prison camps was very uncommon." Lieutenant Newton L. Marguiles echoed his words.

US Assistant Judge Advocate, Jefferson Barracks, April 27th1945. "It is true that the Reich exacted forced labour from foreign workers, but it is also true that, they were for the most part paid and fed well."

"I think some of the persons found themselves better off than at any time in their lives before." added Dr.James K.Pollack, Allied Military Government.

"What did the Germans do to get efficient production from forced labour that we were not able to do with Germans working down the mines? They fed their help and fed them well." Said Max H. Forester, Chief of AMG's Coal and Mining Division in July 1946.

WILL NEMESIS DELIVER?

Asked what were the chances of the evil perpetrators of such crimes being brought to justice, Michael Walsh said that the only thing that stood between the allied sadists and the hangman's rope was the will to bring them to trial.

Precedent on retrospective justice is already a fact of life. Its failure is that war crimes justice is selective and so far applicable only to the defeated foe under highly questionable and internationally criticized legal procedures.

What is needed is to raise public awareness and a lead be given by those in public life whose voice is less likely to be censored. He added that the interests of justice must come before national pride, political expediency and military guilt. "How else." He added, "can human civilization progress than through the administration of justice that is blind to race, political dogma and national interests?"

Sources:

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- (4) Daily Mail, London, 22nd, April, 1995
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